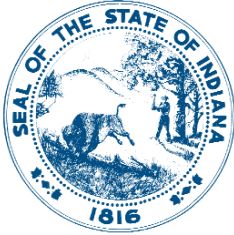


# Tom Kromkowski

Indiana State Representative, District 7



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Spring, 2002

Dear Friends:

The 2002 short legislative session has ended. While we passed several important pieces of legislation, I am disappointed we did not reach agreement on a major tax restructuring plan or address the state budget deficit.

I voted for a plan in the House that would have offset expected property tax increases, created a better climate for economic growth and addressed the current state budget deficit intensified by the national recession. I believe this proposal, while not perfect, answered some of the questions about fairness and equity that have long plagued our tax systems.

I thought we should confront these issues now rather than later if we are to avoid cutting important state services, including funding for public education. Unfortunately, Republicans in the Indiana House and Senate did not share this opinion, and we were unable to establish a compromise in the closing days of the session. It concerns me that the Republicans are unwilling to do anything to address the short-term financial stability of our state. I remain hopeful that we can reach some consensus on these issues in the coming months before deeper, more painful cuts become necessary.

Despite my concerns about the budget deficit and taxes, I am pleased we did enact several proposals to help a variety of Hoosiers. We passed landmark public safety and anti-terrorism legislation, enacted important provisions that protect children and approved several health care initiatives. I have detailed a number of those new laws inside this newsletter.

Please contact me if you have questions or concerns about state government. You can e-mail me at [H7@in.gov](mailto:H7@in.gov) or call toll free at 1-800-382-9842.

Sincerely,

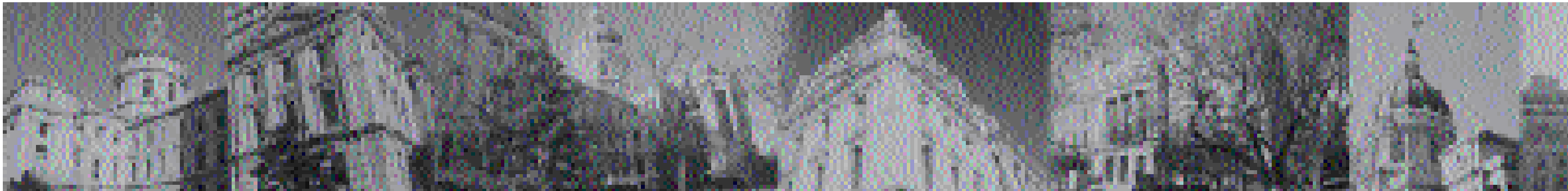


## Inside

•Anti-terrorism laws

•Election reform

•Health care initiatives



## No agreement on taxes, budget

We reached the March 14 deadline for adjournment with no agreement on restructuring Indiana's tax code and resolving the deficit in the biennial state budget.

House Bill 1004, which I supported and helped pass out of the House, addressed both of those issues. The leaders in the Indiana Senate, however, felt there was no need to address the budget situation at this time.

I voted for a plan that would have reduced the effects of a court-ordered property tax reassessment, encouraged job creation through a series of business initiatives and expanded eligibility for the earned income tax credit. We could have achieved all of this with only a small increase in the state sales tax and the corporate net income tax.

The legislation also addressed our current budget crisis, providing new revenue that would prevent cuts in important state services. We are not alone in our current budget situation as virtually every state in the nation has a budget deficit due to the national recession and lingering effects of the September 11 attacks. I believe we must act now rather than later to avoid future cuts.

## Legislature stands together on public safety legislation

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, officials across the country took a serious look at the ability of local emergency systems to respond to a similar threat. The members of the Indiana General Assembly passed several laws during this session to help meet the challenge of our new defense requirements.

House Bill 1001 establishes a Counter-Terrorism and Safety Council (C-TASC) that will serve as the coordinating state agency for emergency management response to terrorist acts. Chaired by the lieutenant governor, the council will develop anti-terrorism strategy, including placing an affiliate of the council in each county, coordinating efforts with the U.S. Office of Homeland Security, and implementing counter-terrorism training in the state law enforcement academy.

Part of a \$1.25 BMV service charge will be used to develop an integrated wireless public safety system to help connect agencies across the state in case of an emergency. A portion of the service

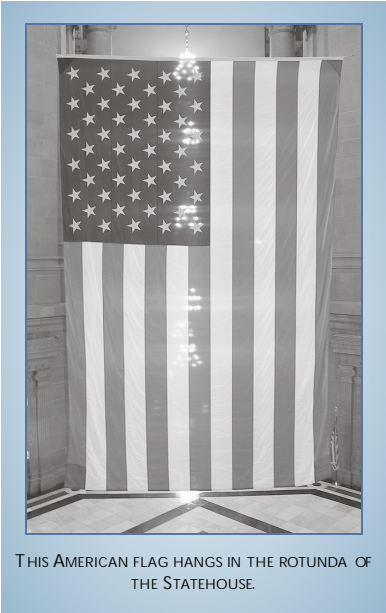
charge will also be used to alleviate the state police crime laboratory backlog.

The law includes penalties for several terrorist and public safety issues, including:

- money laundering to support terrorist activities
- restrictions on the issuance of commercial driver's licenses and hazardous materials endorsements
- penalties concerning regulated explosives or devices, the possession of a weapon of mass destruction or the intent to cause a person to believe that a substance is a weapon of mass destruction

- disorderly conduct on airport premises
- interruption or impairment of work at a food processing facility
- the expulsion of a student who brings a destructive device on school property.

While no one foresaw the devastation of the September attacks, we are taking every step possible to maintain Indiana's safety to the fullest extent.



## Kromkowski authors election reform law

House Bill 1101, which I authored, continues recent trends in election reforms by allowing people to cast a provisional ballot if they believe they are registered to vote in their precinct, but their names are not listed on the voter rolls. Election officials would verify that they are eligible to vote after all ballots are cast. The bill also ensures that voters have a chance to correct their ballots should they make a mistake.

Voting systems will be made more accessible to people with disabilities, it will become easier for overseas and military voters to vote by absentee ballot and there will be increased efforts to educate voters through the posting of voter rights.

## Sex offender registry

A new law expands the sex offender registry by requiring offenders to register with the sheriff in the county in which they reside, and that county sheriffs jointly maintain a sex offender registry Website containing the photograph, address and other information about an offender. Senate Bill 367 provides that one person shall have direct responsibility for the registry, and makes defacing a copy of the registry a crime.

## New crime legislation addresses variety of concerns

Each year the Legislature passes a number of bills that create new offenses or toughen penalties against existing crimes. During the 2002 session, lawmakers passed a measure designed to provide some relief for family and friends of people who have been murdered.



REP. KROMKOWSKI DISCUSSES LEGISLATION WITH REP. CHET DOBIS.

House Bill 1012 requires the judge in certain murder cases to allow relatives to make victim impact statements in open court after the sentence is passed on an offender. Giving family and friends a chance to convey their feelings about a horrible crime to the person who committed it can have positive psychological effects for the mourners. In addition, impact statements help reinforce the severity of the crime to the offender.

Another new law will penalize fuel retailers who artificially inflate gas prices in times of crisis. House Bill 1015 will allow the Indiana attorney general to investigate complaints on price gouging and seek relief that would include fines and restitution to victims.

House Bill 1005 is designed to prevent people from throwing such burning material as lit cigarettes from moving vehicles. Anyone found guilty of the crime could receive a fine of up to \$1,000.

## Organ donor and other health care legislation from this Session

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, many looked for ways to provide assistance to their fellow Americans. We see that compassionate spirit in various forms, including organ and bone marrow donation. Until recently, volunteers were charged a \$90 fee to donate, preventing some people from making a donation. House Bill 1049 waives that fee, using funds from the state's Anatomical Gift Promotion Fund.

Improving Hoosier health care is the object of several other new laws created this year. House Bill 1252 broadens guidelines to permit more self-directed in-home care. Thanks to Senate Bill 213, emergency medical technicians will be able to administer epinephrine to patients experiencing severe allergic reactions or anaphylactic shock. In the event of Medicaid cuts, the mentally ill will still receive necessary drugs prescribed to treat diseases like bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and major depression with the passage of House Bill 1233. Finally, Indiana will join the Interstate Nurse Licensure Compact with House Bill 1297, which permits a licensed nurse in any state that is a member of the compact to practice here without having to obtain a new license.

## Telephone Privacy List still available

If you haven't yet registered for the Telephone Privacy List, you still have time. Although the list is already in effect, it is updated every three months. If you register now, your name will be included when the updated list takes effect July 1, 2002.

The Telephone Privacy List is free to Indiana residents. By adding your name, most telemarketers will be prevented by law from calling you. You only need to register once to be included.

### How to register

You may register by calling the toll-free number, 1-888-834-9969. You may also register online at the Attorney General's Website. Go to [www.in.gov/attorneygeneral](http://www.in.gov/attorneygeneral) and scroll down the page until you come to the ringing phone icon. This will take you to the Telephone Privacy List page. Click on the link that says "Register Here," and fill out the registration form.

### Certain exceptions

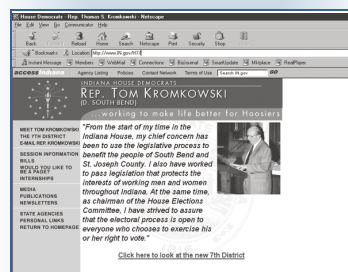
Registering with the Telephone Privacy List will not eliminate all telemarketing calls. Four types of solicitors are exempt from the law: Charitable organizations using volunteers or employees to make calls; newspapers using employees to make calls; insurance agents; and realtors.

### Violations

If you receive a telemarketing call from someone other than the exceptions listed above after the list becomes effective, you may down-

load a complaint form from the Attorney General's Website or call 1-812-355-5915. If a company is in violation, the Attorney General's Office may issue a court order to prevent further calls and may seek a fine of up to \$25,000.

### Stay informed about this and other issues online with Rep. Kromkowski



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